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AUTHOR Comprone, Joseph J.
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ABSTRACT

A dialectical heuristic that can be used to guide students through the stages of writing about a literary experience is discussed in this paper. The first section of the paper provides a working definition of literature as an area of discourse and divides the process of reading and writing about literature into three general phases: progressive, transitional, and symbolic. The second section presents Kenneth Burke's method of finding the elements and purposes of dramatic action in any discourse as a model for critical writing about literature. The third section is an application of this Burkean heuristic to John Donne's poem, "The Prohibition," and includes role-playing exercises to use with students. The last section summarizes the case for teaching rhetorical criticism of literature in the writing classroom. (AEA)

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Burke's Dramatism as a Means of Using Literature to Teach Composition

In a paper presented at the Modern Language Association in 1977 I outlined a set of procedures through which composition teachers might apply Burke's key concepts--the pentad, terministic screens, form as created expectation, perspectives by incongruity, and identification--to the composing processes of students.[1] Burke's process-oriented dialectic of rhetoric, I then felt, could be naturally adapted to current research into the composing process, all of which has emphassized the basically recursive, sequential, and cyclical nature of reading and writing.[2] This paper will attempt to apply a similar critical-dialectical paradigm to the literary work as it is used to inform and direct the process of writing critical essays. Before applying Burke to teaching writing, however, I must provide a working definition of literature as an area of discourse.

I

A Definition of Literature for Teaching Writing

Louise Rosenblatt's recently-published The Reader, The Text, and The Poem provides a definition of literature-as-event that comes closest to giving the classroom teacher of writing and reading a workable conceptual model.[3] Professor Rosenblatt sees the poem (which she uses--as do most generic critics--to refer to all types of literature--poem, story, novel, play, etc.) as an entity distinct in itself from the author, the text, and the reader. The literary work, in other words, is evoked by the reader from the text, his or her past experiences and knowledge of the language, and of literary conventions. From the text, in the process of reading, the reader takes on an aesthetic stance in which the experience of reading itself rather than any secondary, pragmatic aim becomes primary. During reading, the reader absorbs and categorizes cues--syntactic, semantic, and literary--that enable him or her to create an event that has its own existence.

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From this event, the reader gradually develops concepts of assumed author, reader, and purpose. Interpretation, then, is the reader's means of becoming critic; by learning while reading how to create the "event" for which the text is a blueprint and the reader's past and current experiences are co-ingredients, the reader re-reads or re-experiences the event, referring back to the text, the assumed author who is suggested primarily by the textual cues, and relevant personal experiences to explain the poem or event's general, symbolic purpose. Critical writing about literature becomes an activity in which the primary referent of the writing--the literary "event" of reading--exists only in the minds of readers; the text can be referred to as a kind of blueprint or dramatic script to which the critical writer can refer as he or she explains how the story was experienced. A text, however, will never in and of itself explain or even fully illustrate a critical generalization.[4]

Perhaps some translation of this definition of literature into classroom perspectives will help clarify its implications for teaching writing. All of us, as teachers of writing, have experienced students, who, although they know what they want to say about a work and what parts of the text have contributed directly to their interpretations, cannot refer to the text or their personal experiences in ways that coherently express the reading process that leads to the interpretation. Using conventional, new critical methods we, as teachers, are forced to see this type of writing problem as the result of the student-writer's inability to be coherent: he or she has merely failed to explain the relationship between a textual reference, for example, to the Duke's "giving commands" in Brownings's "My Last Duchess" and the critical generality that proclaims the Duke a cruel and powerful man.

Actually, the problem in such a case is often decidedly <u>not</u> the student-writer's inability to explain the connection between critical generalization and

textual citation but his or her failure to understand that the literary event he or she has evoked from the text of "My Last Duchess" might be dramatically different from the event as evoked by another reader who had been taken in by the Duke's eloquence. After all, experienced readers gradually experience the essential cruelty and insensitivity of the Duke as they remind themselves that he is speaking to an emissary from the father of a would-be bride, as they see through his elegant phrasing to the harshness of his "commands." They may, as teachers, be sure that the Duke is arrogant and cruel--no matter how much they admire his verbal dexterity and intelligence--but they certainly cannot assume that students will catch on quickly during first and second readings. Students as writers, in turn, cannot assume that their readers have gotten beyond that first reading to an understanding of the poem as completed, dramatic event.

What significance does this explanation of a problem in student writing have for teachers? Above all, we must come to see reading as an ongoing process in which the student develops particular responses to earlier reading experiences into a completed, dramatic event. Dividing the process of reading and writing about literature into three general phases--the progressive, the transitional, and the symbolic--can help us control and direct this process without stifling student creativity. The progressive phase is defined by brief writing exercises that help the student reader structure and clarify the literary event before, during, and immediately after actual reading is in progress; the transitional phase is defined by longer, practice writings that will enable the student reader to approach the experienced event as a means of clarifying the perspectives of other readers; the symbolic phase is defined by a completed draft explaining what the event produced by the work means in relation to human behavior, literature, or culture. In this final stage, the critical writer sees the completed event as a symbolic action clarifying a perspective on life in general.

Literature considered as human event, created by writers who produce texts that, in turn, serve as scripts for events in the minds of readers who actively contribute to the creation of that event becomes the ideal foundation for applying Burke's fundamentally dramatistic approach to literary criticism. Several key rhetorical terms must also be clarified at this point: assumed author, assumed reader, distance, and the writer as role-player.[5] Walter Ong, S.J. wrote recently of a history, beginning shortly after the discovery and widespread use of the printing press, of conventions and techniques that writers--particularly writers of literature--have used for several centuries to fictionalize their audiences. Once the in-the-flesh listener had been replaced by an absent reader, Ong argues, "the writer succeeds in writing...because he can fictionalize..an audience he has learned to know not from daily life but from earlier writers, and so on back to the dawn of written narrative..."[6] The original writer reworks that tradition to fictionalize a somewhat new audience, but even the most original of writers--a Vonnegut or Pynchon, perhaps--departs from a know tradition of audiences.

Although work by critics such as Ong, Wayne Booth, Walker Gibson, Rosenblatt, and Wolfgang Iser have only begun the job of showing how writers have progressively learned to fictionalize their audiences, as teachers of critical writing we must recognize the theoretical and practical difficulties with which these theorists have confronted us. How can undergraduates inexperienced as readers find a stance in relation to their experience of a work unless we, as teachers, can define such stances for them as they proceed through the progressive, transitional, and symbolic stages of writing about literature? To put it another way, how can readers who have not had the experience of being fictionalized in the complex ways literary audiences are fictionalized by the work itself be brought into the context of a

text and its assumed readers and purposes without simply being told what this writer's audience was meant to think and feel according to accepted critical lore?

Specific questions such as these bring us to an at least tentative answer to the question that heads this section: what kind of definition of literature works best for teaching writing? If literature, in essence, is dramatized event evoked from an interaction among text, assumed author, and fictionalized reader, and if the literary event is in itself at least partially created by the character the audience assumes for itself according to the cues that are employed by the author, then responding to a literary work as critical writer becomes a process of adopting a series of progressively more objective stances in relation to, first, the parts and, then, the whole of the literary experience. Walker Gibson, in both Tough Sweet and Stuffy and Persona, suggests that the writer's responses to reading literature--particularly the novel--be centered in and controlled by role-playing, that the writer, first, come to see the various roles as they are created by language in the literary work and, then, develop role-projections of his or her own in relation to characters and speakers in the work.[7] In a chapter on reading first-person narrators in novels, for example, Gibson suggests sequences of exercises in which students first describe as specifically as possible the characters of narrators by referring to details of style; then he, later in the book, suggests exercises in which students are asked to role-play responses to those narrators and their actions.[8]

As our knowledge of the rhetoric of literature is informed by predominantly theoretical critics such as Wayne Booth, Iser, Rosenblatt and David Bleich, we can turn to the primarily practical work of Alan Purves and Gibson to inform our classroom approaches with particular role-playing and reader-response strategies.

But Burke is the one to whom we can go to bring these theoretical and practical strategies together in a comprehensive and coherent theory of using literature to teach writing. Burke provides, in other words, the paradigm for directing students as they find ways to position themselves in relation to the experience of a work.[9]

II

Burke's Dramatism as a Model for Critical Writing about Literature

Burke's theories of language are both philosophically and pragmatically rooted in drama. In Chapter Seven of Logic as Symbolic Action, Burke explains the origins of all verbal action as it evolved from the linguistic concept of the negative: once man could tell through words what was not, he was able in turn to establish what was.[10] From this essentially dialectical dramatism, supported by reference to Kant's categorical imperative and his theory of linguistic universalization, Burke establishes dramatic play, the give-and-take of verbal action against nature's flux and other men's particular ways of establishing order--or the positive--through language (the negative) as the basically human response to the world.

Once we recognize the essentially dramatic nature of all of our uses of language, we can move in building our paradigm for teaching to Burke's more particular methods and techniques--tools he suggests we use to find the elements and purposes of dramatic action in any given piece of discourse. The pentad--act (what?), scene (where?), agent (who?), agency (how?), and purpose (why?)--and Burke's concepts of terministic screen, perspectives by incongruity, and identification can supply the skeleton of our methodology.

The pentad and its related concepts, however, must be understood as the bases for classroom and critical heuristics, not as rigid formulas or syllogisms

that are capable of being presented in the same order or equation every time. As heuristics, the critical writer must use them in ways that are particularly appropriate to the literary event being examined, and he or she must develop a functional sense of the ratios that may be created between or among the five terms of the pentad. Analyzing a short poem by Donne, for example, might demand that emphasis be placed on the relationship between the sonnet as act and the assumed speaker as actor; analyzing the first paragraph of The Ambassadors, however, might demand a comparison of actor, (Lambert Strether) as presented in the carefully-chosen language (action) and scene (Britain) of the opening scene of the novel.[11] The writer must, in other words, know the agonistic structure of a literary event thoroughly before he or she decides to emphasize a particular ratio between or among two or more components of the pentad.

We should add one directive before we conclude our application of a Burkean paradigm to the teaching of a literary work. The pentad and other key concepts are applied in generally different ways to literary and referential discourse.[12] Reference discourse, in which the experience of reading itself is secondary to the information or message the reader takes away from reading after the process has been completed, usually demands that the pentad be applied to the speaker, subject, audience, and assumed author/assumed reader relationships as they exist outside the work. An analysis of an article explaining "The Effective Uses of Statistics," for example, places the readers's emphasis on how he or she might effectively use statistics after reading, not on the interplay of elements within the article during reading. Donne's "Prohibition," in contrast, demands that its reader experience the work as literary event first--only after that event has been completed can the reader make a symbol or set of symbols of the whole work and fit it or them into a context of personal, social, or cultural values.[13]

Let us return at this point to the progressive, transitional, and symbolic stages of writing about literature. During the early, progressive stage, the reader uses act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose to frame specific questions about the dramatic components within the work.[14] Moving into the transitional or middle stage of the composing process, the reader uses specific but tentative answers, perhaps in paragraph form, as a basis for developing perspectives by incongruity that will, in turn, help him or her create definitions of the rheotrical context of the work. Also, at this point, the reader is ready to use the ratios among act, agent, agency, scene, and purpose to explain how the author created meaning out of a dramatic experience.

The original experience of the literary work as self-contained dramatic experience--of narrators, characters, actions, and motivations within the work as they create a world of its own--is now looked at retrospectively to allow the reader to comprehend how these internal elements might have been used by an assumed author to make a symbolic statement about human values, beliefs, and ways of seeing in general.[15] The transitional stage is marked in the classroom by workshops, oral presentations, and personal interactions in which students use their initial responses to Burke's pentad as terministic screens upon which they project other students's tentative responses as well as their own. A terministic screen for Burke is a perspective formulated in a symbolic language, to be taken as a not the perspective on a literary event.

> Whatever terms we use, they necessarily constitute a corresponding kind of screen; and any such screen necessarily directs the attention to one field rather than another. Within that field there can be different screens, each with its ways of directing the attention and shaping the range of observations implicit in the given terminology.[16]

The screen metaphor as a means of describing what happens in the middle or transitional phase of composing operates effectively only if we imagine one set of perspectives--the writer's--superimposed upon another--the responses of other readers. As the middle phase comes to a close, the reader crystallizes his perspective on the work by synthesizing the various terministic screens, creating a rough draft that can function as a holistic explanation of what is happening inside the work.

The symbolic or third and final phase begins with that somewhat confused, superimposed screen called a rough draft. The rough draft is confused on two levels: as representation of the dramatic context of the work itself, it has incorporated the writer's and other readers's perspectives--these perspectives will need pulling together into a coherent, internal reading of the work; as a tentative representation of the relationship between the work as symbolic whole and the critical reader's set of personal and social values, it has incorporated the text and the individual reader's responses. Another way of explaining this second level is to recall the assumed-author/assumed-reader/assumed-purpose triad as it is posited by Wayne Booth, Walter Ong, Walker Gibson, Louise Rosenblatt, and others. What the work as a whole represents is the assumed author's purpose as he or she makes a story or poem.[17]

Burke's theory of literary identification is a useful tool here because it can unify the dramatistic and varying-perspectives heuristic that was primary during the progressive and transitional phases of composing.[18] Identification defines, when applied to literature, the particular way in which the reader positions himself in relation to the work. Taking an "aesthetic stance," in the terms of Louise Rosenblatt, the reader, first and primarily, attempts to complete a unified experience while reading (including, of course, several actual readings, if the work demands them). During these stages of actual reading the writer may

take notes and transcribe hypothetical propositions concerning the unity and meaning of the reading experience; but he or she will remain a part, a participant in the reading event. Active participation leads, of course, to almost total identification with the characters, ideas, events, actions, and scenes of the literary experience. The reader keeps critical distance subordinate to involvement during these early stages.

With the beginning of the symbolic stage, however, the emphasis shifts from experience shared and participated in to event symbolic of meaning larger than itself. Here Burke's concept of consubstantiation, borrowed from religious rhetoric, helps clarify the critical writer's change in stance as he or she moves from the transitional (second) to the symbolic or third stage. Retaining within the critical transaction the sense of sharing in the drama of the work, the writer shifts now to a more distant, critical perspective, seeing the event as symbolic of human action in general. Identification, then, describes the appropriate aesthetic/critical stance, the appropriate blend of involvement and distance that is required of the writer-critic during the later stages of composing. He or she is, as Burke put it, "both joined [with the work] and separate [from it], at once a distinct substance [as critical reader] and consubstantial with another [in this case, the literary event itself]" (A Rhetoric of Motives, p. 21).

III

An Application to Donne's "The Prohibition"[19]

Donne's poetry and much of seventeenth-century poetry in general, with its emphases on the rational appeal in the form of paradox, conceits, dramatic irony, and intricate structures and designs in support of complex patterns of thought provides the writing teacher with a rhetorical context excellently suited to the type of dramatic approach to critical writing that we have described so far. Thomas O. Sloan focuses upon the rhetorical context of "The Prohibition" by

pointing to Peter Ramus's concept of dichotomy as the central, organizing rhetorical principle behind the poem.[20] Sloan incisively analyzes the poem's internal dramatic structure--the relationship among the speaker, subject, and audience of the poem as it exists on the page, inside the text itself; he illustrates how the overall logical pattern of dichotomy is played out in a three-stanza poem in which the first stanza presents a frustrated speaker who paradoxically asks his seemingly indifferent courtly lover not to love him because, by causing his death, she would remove the source of her own pleasure, which has been created primarily by her past spurning of his advances. The second stanza, in contrast, shows us this same speaker telling his lover not to hate him because, in hating him, she will destroy the object of her hatred by causing his death--and the opportunity to gratify repeatedly her hatred. Finally, in stanza three, both sides of the dichotomous, either-or, argument are combined in a synthesizing stanza in which the speaker tells his lover to <u>both</u> love and hate him because only then will she be able to partake of the joys of sexual love ("...that I may die the gentler way") and the pleasures of repeatedly lording it over her lover ("So shall I, live, thy stage, not triumph be.")

My purpose is not to explicate the internal structural and stylistic intricasies of this poem--the Sloan article does that admirably.[21] I do wish, however, to emphasize, first, how the internal intricasies of logic and structure function as a dramatic means, a metaphor for the characters speaking and spoken to inside the poem, then I wish to show how these internal elements can be progressively revealed to students, using Burke's concepts, as students, first, experience the poem's context and, second, create a dramatic event in which these internal elements reveal the irony of the implied speaker's self-denigration as it is used in this poem to win the admiration and favor of his lover.

Sloan concludes his article by arguing that irony becomes, when the poem is reconsidered as a whole, the essential quality of the poem: the reader's recognition that the speaker has triumphed by creating an artifact--the poem itself--that demonstrates his complete control over not only his lover and her emotions but the essential rules and contexts of courtly lovemaking (Corbett, pp. 13-14). He is, in essence, a master of using rhetoric and logic--the elements of the Ramist pedagogy--as a means of winning emotional battles. His mastery is itself most pronounced in the careful and ingenious manipulations of paradox, logical structure, contrasting imagery, and internal repetitions of the poem as object. We have, in "The Prohibition" a poem in which the necessity of bringing the students through a systematic experience of their internal and external responses to the text and its context is essential to our success in teaching them to write critically about the poem. The poem as shared experience and the poem as dramatic event must synthesize in the reader into one, unified response.

How do we apply our understanding of Burke's pentad to the process of responding to "The Prohibition"? The role-playing exercises that follow are based upon Walker Gibson's approaches to literature through the rhetorical triad, and they are organized to follow sequentially through the progressive, transitional, and symbolic phases of writing about the literary event. During the progressive stage, the exercises should help the student find a stance in relation to the experience of the poem that will clarify the speaker, subject, and audience within the poem; during the transitional stage, the exercises should turn the student, at first, back to particular elements of style and structure as the author's means of controlling the reader's response to the speaker and his lover as characters in a drama and, second, forward to considerations of what the action and scene within the poem's limited context represents on the external level, where

assumed author and reader share a more comprehensive understanding of love as it is symbolized by the poem as event. The concepts of terministic screen and perspectives by incongruity direct the writing of exercises in the transitional stage.

Finally, the exercises in the symbolic stage focus on particular ways in which writers can take their responses to characters and elements in the poem and use them to explain their interpretations of the poem as a whole. Here the concept of identification will guide our approaches to students, and the poem-as-event will be incorporated into a larger body of beliefs, values, and principles related to love between man and woman. (All these exercises are written as they would be presented to students.)

Progressive-Phase Exercises

1. Who is speaking to whom? Make a list of adjectives you believe would describe the character of the speaker (Is he vain, proud, humble, arrogant, honest, sincere, trifling, intelligent, articulate?). Take this list of adjectives and go back to the poem itself to point out stylistic and structu al devices that you believe reinforce your interpretation of the speaker's character. How does the breath/blood and sighs/tears contrast in imagery, for example, help define the speaker's character? How does the poem's argumentative structure--based on the rhetorical principle of dichotomy--provide you with insight into the speaker's character? How do the stylistic and structural uses of verbal paradox and iteration help you define the speaker's character?
2. Apply the same process of inquiry to the implied audience--the indifferent lover--in the poem. How do we know her character through what the speaker implies about her behavior? Is she beautiful, vain,

condescending, arrogant, and worldly, or is she innocent, humble, sweet, and kind? Again, go back to the language, style, and structure of the poem to establish your interpretation of her character.

3. In question number two, we analyzed a part of the poem's scene (the implied audience in the poem) in relation to the language of the poem (the linguistic act of the speaker). Now we should be prepared to generalize further by considering the whole scene of the poem in relation to the speaker's attempt to persuade his lover to both love and hate him. Where might this little drama be taking place? Why? How does this implied scene or setting within the poem help define the speaker's three-stanza speech (the action in the poem)? What words, images, and structures in the poem help you imagine a scene? (In this sequence of questions, we are asking students to define a context for the dramatic action as it explains the speaker's intentions in addressing his lover.)
4. Writing Exercise: In three or four informally-written paragraphs, explain to other readers of the poem how one element in the pentad affects another, how--for example--the speaker's use of dichotomous argument with a final synthesis might function as his means of convincing his reluctant lover to go to bed with him.

Transitional-Phase Exercises

1. After hearing several of the progressive-stage writings read aloud and discussed, take your own first writing and combine it with one other student's. If that student, for example, argues that the speaker is cunning and devious in trying to seduce his lover and you have argued that his lover knows the game he is playing and is equal to the match,

then you should write a two-or-three page draft in which you describe the relationship of speaker and implied audience in the poem within the larger context of ironic and sophisticated love-making among equals.

2. Take part in a debate or panel discussion in which you use one or two elements of the pentad to argue against what you believe is--especially after hearing other student's responses to the poem--a common misreading of the dramatic situation in the poem. To do a good job on this panel, of course, you will have to know what you are arguing against to support your own position more effectively.

Symbolic-Stage Exercises

1. Now we are ready to consider the assumed author, his purpose and methods, and his assumed audience. Begin by explaining to a group of students who have also read the poem and discussed its internal elements and context how you would relate what you have experienced in the poem to your own general experience with relationships between lovers--from personal experience, from others's experiences, from movies, books, songs. Be selective; use only examples that you can specifically compare to the experience of the poem itself.
2. Write a one-page explanation of how readers of "The Prohibition" should come to understand the assumed author's attitude toward sexual, emotional, and spiritual love. Is he jaded and ironic? Is he enthusiastic and serious? Is he both? Is he pessimistic and cynical or optimistic and positive? Now you should refer to your own understanding of the poem as a dramatic event in supporting your position. Remember, a good reader can stay within the event of the poem while he or she uses that event as a whole to make a comment on general, human values.

3. Now write the final paper. It should be primarily informative; in other words, it should tell your reader what the poem says about romantic love in general by referring back to the dramatic event itself. It should be a synthesis of discourse at all three phases--the progressive, the transitional, and the symbolic. It should incorporate careful textual analysis, informed discussion of dramatic context in the poem, and the ability. through role-playing, to interrelate the internal and external dramas that are created by the poem.

IV

A Final Word on Criticism in the Writing Classroom

Philip M. Keith, writing on "Burke for the Composition Class," argued recently that Burke's basically dialectical approach to composing in words can help us get back to what is really basic in composing: critical thinking as a means of synthesizing opposites of one kind or another. For Burke, such synthesizing is the human drama, a symbolic action against chaos with words as prime tools. Keith goes on to argue that these "dialectical instruments can teach critical thinking and writing more directly than the standard rhetoric text because they reflect the thinking process rather than the form of the finished product."[22]

Such recent discussions, including my own, have primarily emphasized the capability in Burke's dialectical framework for "opening up" the composing process. Composition, however, is both an opening and a closing: ideas are explored and re-invented in a progressive sequence of looking-back and looking-forward. Edward P.J. Corbett puts the case well when he says that the rhetorical criticism of literature allows "the critic to move back and forth between the work and the author and the audience, with glances, if need be, at external documents for supplementary and confirmatory evidence...rhetorical criticism

enables [the critic]...to discover a variety of the causes and conditions for a literary work being what it is (italics mine)."[23]

Most students in beginning, intermediate, or advanced English or composition classes where writing about literature is required do not know how to approach the work on the broadest levels. They may know a few critical and literary terms, and they may be able to enjoy stories, sometimes even poems or plays, that they read, as they often put it, "for pleasure." But, in my experience, they are singularly unable to, first, enter the experience of the story as co-participant with text and author, and second, make an event of the reading experience itself that can be transformed into part of their sets of values and beliefs. Burke, then, gives us a dialectical heuristic that we can use to guide students through the stages of writing about a literary experience--including the building of a personal response from the experience of reading as the re-creation of a text, the synthesizing of personal and others's responses, and the assimilating of literary experience and literary event into a critical perspective. He provides us, in other words, with a rhetorical-dialectical approach to writing about literature that can open up and close the potential range of interpretation as the composing process progresses. It can also provide us with a critical method that is poised somewhere between the extreme objectivity of new criticism and the recently-popular and sometimes extreme subjectivity of transactional, psychoanalytical, and reader-response criticism.

Take heed of loving mee,
At least remember, I forbad it thee;
Not that I shall repaire my'unthrifty wast
Of Breath and Blood, upon they sighes, and teares,
By being to thee then what to me thou wast;
But, so great Joy, our life at once outweares,
Then, least thy love, by my death, frustrate bee,
If thou love mee, take heed of loving mee.

Take heed of hating mee,
Or too much triumph in the Victorie,
Not that I shall be mine owne office,
And hate with hate againe retaliate;
But thou wilt lose the stile of conquerour,
If I, they conquest, perish by they hate.
Then, least my being nothing lessen thee,
If thou hate mee, take heed of hating mee.

Yet, love and hate mee too,
So, these extreames shall neithers office doe;
Love mee, that I may die the gentler way;
Hate mee, because they love is too great for mee;
Or let these two, themselves, not me decay;
So shall I, live, thy Stage, not triumph bee;
Lest thou thy love and hate mee undoe
To let mee live, O love and hate mee too.

Footnotes

[1] This paper has subsequently been published, in revised form, in College Composition and Communication, 29, 4 (1978), 336-340.

[2]Aside from numerous recent articles in Research in the Teaching of English, College Composition and Communication, College English, The Rhetoric Society Quarterly, and The Journal of Reading among others, composition teachers can look to Janet Emig's The Composing Process of Twelfth-Graders (Urbana, Illinois; NCTE, 1971), Peter Elbow's Writing Without Teachers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), Frank D'Angelo's A Conceptual Theory of Rhetoric (Boston: Winthrop Publishing Company, 1975), and Mina Shaughnessy's Errors and Expectations--particularly Chapters Seven and Eight on going beyond the sentence and developing general expectations--(New York: Oxford University Press, 1977) for book-length studies of composition as process. Charles Cooper and Lee Odell have recently edited the most useful single source of commentary on composing as process: Research on Composing: Points of Departure (Urbana, Illinosi: NCTE, 1978).

[3]Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978. Chapter Two--"The Poem as Event"--best illustrates the essentially transactional nature of Rosenblatt's medel of the reading and critical processes. This chapter--and Chapter Three on reading literary and non-literary language--also maps out Rosenblatt's primary sources--Dewey, William James, the transactional psychologists (particularly Ames and Cantrell), and developmental psychology as epitomized in Piaget.

[4]Rosenblatt places her "literature-as-experienced-event" model between the extremes of objective and subjective criticism. See particularly Chapter Seven, where Rosenblatt explains the differences between her transactional model and the tenets of new criticism and structuralism. Subjective criticism, in contrast, has recently come to place primary emphasis on analyzing and defining

the reader's part in the reading and criticizing process: David Bleich, Subjective Criticism (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978); Norman Holland, Five Readers Reading (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), and Walter Ong, "The Writer's Audience Is Always a Fiction," PMLA, 90, 1 (1975), 9-21.

[5]Among rhetorical critics who place emphasis on the role and concept of audience in literature, Wayne Booth (The Rhetoric of Fiction, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961 and The Rhetoric of Irony, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974) has done pioneering work in the traditional vein of rhetorical criticism (considering the interrelationships of speaker, subject, audience, tone, attitude, and assumed author and reader from a primarily moral perspective) and critics such as Wolfgang Iser The Implied Reader, (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974) and David Bleich, Subjective Criticism (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins, 1978) have done pioneering work in the more radical vein of structural and subjective perspectives on the rhetorical triad. In both these seemingly dichotomous approaches to readers, however, the emphasis in critical response is being shifted from the text and the author's intentions to the reader's response.

[6]"The Writer's Audience Is Always A Fiction," PMLA, 90, 1 (1975), 9-21. Rather than discussing an audience or reader assumed from the rhetorical context of specific texts, Ong emphasizes the general effect conventions of print have had on individual authors's shaping of literary events.

[7]Tough, Sweet, and Stuffy (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1966); Persona (New York: Random House, 1969). See particularly Chapters Two and Three of Tough, Sweet, and Stuffy on narrative voices in general and contemporary fiction in particular and Chapters One and Three on

"Reading the First-Person Singular" and "Reading a Novel" in Persona.

[8]The long lists of exercises at the end of Gibson's chapters in Persona are excellent examples of activities appropriate to the progressive and transitional phases of writing as described in this article.

[9]Critics and teachers working from three different perspectives have made emphatic arguments for the importance of the writer's stance in teaching writing about literature. In an often-cited article ("The Rhetorical Stance," College Composition and Communication, October, 1963), Wayne Booth used one of his graduate students as an example of a writer unable to avoid obfuscation and critical doublespeak until he had imagined and argued himself into a dialectic with his teacher in reference to his reading of a literary work. In The Reader, the Text, and the Poem, Louise Rosenblatt argues that students learning to write about literature must come to understand that while reading "efferent" or referential language the reader focuses on how the content will be used after the process of reading has been completed, but in "literary" reading the focus is on what happens during reading as the work is experienced. Criticizing literature, in other words, depends, on the most basic level, on the critic's knowing how and when to take on the "literary" stance (pp. 22-47). Walker Gibson, in Persona, devotes a final chapter to "Language as Role-Playing" in which the remarks of various theorists are combined to support the contention that readers themselves must find a role within the literary work that will enable them to develop critical perspectives (pp. 76-87).

[10]Chapter Seven of Language as Symbolic Action (Berkeley: University of California, 1966) best establishes the philosophical underpinnings of Burke's dialectical dramatism as it is established in the linguistic phenomenon of the negative (pp. 419-479). Chapter Eight of this book (pp. 480-506) explains the limitations of formalist-objective criticism in relation to the dialectical drama of Burke's theory.

[11]Ian Watt, "The First Paragraph of The Ambassadors: An Explication," Essays in Criticism, 10 (1960), 250-274. Also reprinted in Edward P.J. Corbett, ed., Rhetorical Analyses of Literary Works (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 184-203.

[12]In A Theory of Discourse (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1971), James Kinneavy establishes the four, general aims of discourse--referential, persuasive, expressive, and literary--by synthesizing M.L. Abrams's distinctions among mimetic, pragmatic, expressive, and objective approaches to literary works with the rhetorical tradition's distinctions among discourse that emphasizes speaker, subject, and/or audience. He indirectly upholds a distinction between referential (exploratory, informative, and scientific) and literary discourse that is similar to Rosenblatt's transactional one, but he closes his section on literary discourse by arguing an essentially objectivist ("the primacy of structure") stance, as long as the rhetorical contexts both inside and outside the work are systematically considered (pp. 348-357).

[13]The Appendix (pp. 451-462 of A Theory of Discourse provides an illustrative analysis of the essay "The Effective Use of Statistics" as essentially the informative type of reference discourse.

[14]Part I, pp. 1-97 of Language as Symbolic Action discusses the pentad within the general framework of literary drama. The essentially agonistic structure of literature is most clearly set down in Burke's The Philosophy of Literary Form (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1941). The most systematic treatment of the pentad and the potential ratios among its components as they apply to all discourse are contained in Burke's A Grammar of Motives (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1945).

[15]It is at this point in the composing process that students come up against the tension between the concepts of shared beliefs and values and objectivity in literature. Consider, in particular, Wayne Booth's discussion

of the dangers of impersonal and unreliable forms of narration and the new critical, objectivist demands that the critic stay inside the text (see The Rhetoric of Fiction, pp. 339-398). During the transitional stage of writing, the student begins to move from considerations of the work as symbolic experience evoked from the text and the reader's past experience to the work as event representative of beliefs and values.

[16]Language as Symbolic Action, p. 50.

[17]In Attitudes towards History (Los Altos, California: Hermes Publication's, 1959), p. 260 ff, Burke uses the terministic screen and perspectives by incongruity concepts as a means of countering the simplistic, either-or thinking in much of modern science. We might apply his dialectical critique of scientific thinking to our discussion of the second and third phases of writing about literature by emphasizing that considerations of assumed author, reader, and purpose are methods of assuring that writers go beyond solipsistic responses to the text-as-object, that they take on other perspectives as they compose critical responses.

[18]Explicit discussions of identification in literature appear in Burke's A Rhetoric of Motives (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1952), pp. 19 ff, 35 ff, and 328 ff.

[19]A complete copy of the poem appears at the end of this article.

[20]"A Rhetorical Analysis of John Donne's 'The Prohibition'," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 48 (1962), 38-45. Reprinted in Corbett's Rhetorical Analyses of Literary Works, pp. 3-15.

[21]Sloan shows how epanalepsis (iteration of sounds at the beginnings and ends of stanzas) discrete and disjunctive axioms, the couplet, paradoxical images, and antithetical structure combine to create an overall pattern of correspondence

and contrast in the poem. These formal devices in the poem "communicate" but do not themselves "contain" the meaning of "The Prohibition" (Corbett, p. 13).

[22]College Composition and Communication, 28 (1977), 348.

[23]Rhetorical Analyses of Literary Works, p. XVIII of the Introduction.